



## **CITY OF AUBURN**

Community Development Department

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**DATE:** December 27, 2007  
**TO:** Interested Persons  
**FROM:** Reg Murray, Senior Planner

**SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation for an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Baltimore Ravine Specific Plan and Study Areas Project**

**PUBLIC REIVEW PERIOD: December 27, 2007 through February 8, 2008**

### **Introduction**

The City of Auburn will be the lead agency for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Baltimore Ravine Specific Plan and Study Areas project (proposed project). The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), section 15082 states that once a decision is made to prepare an EIR, the lead agency must prepare a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to inform all responsible agencies of that decision. The purpose of the NOP is to provide responsible agencies and interested persons with sufficient information describing the proposed project and its potential environmental effects to enable them to make a meaningful response as to the scope and content of the information to be included in the EIR.

The NOP is being released to request comments on the scope of the EIR for the proposed project. The responses to this NOP will help the City of Auburn determine the scope of the EIR and ensure an appropriate level of environmental review.

The EIR will evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project and recommend mitigation measures, as required. The EIR will provide a project-specific evaluation of the environmental effects of the Baltimore Ravine Specific Plan (BRSP), pursuant to section 15161 of the CEQA Guidelines and a programmatic evaluation for the Study Areas portion of the project, pursuant to section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines.

### **Project Location**

The proposed project site is located in the southwest area of the City of Auburn, approximately 2 miles from the downtown district along Interstate 80 (I-80). The City of Auburn is located in western Placer County, situated at the intersection of I-80 and Highway 49, approximately 30 miles northeast of the City of Sacramento and 15 miles northeast of the City of Roseville (Figure 1, Regional Location Map). The project site is generally bounded by the westbound Union



Pacific Railroad (UPRR) track to the south, Auburn-Folsom Road to the east, and I-80 to the north and northwest. The project site is divided by the eastbound UPRR track (see Figure 3, BRSP Land Use Map).

### **Project Description**

The project site is located in an area of the City designated by the General Plan as Urban Reserve. The City has received an application to develop approximately 264-acres of the 392-acre Urban Reserve area. The remaining 128 acres would be re-designated for future development. In order to accomplish this, the Urban Reserve area has been classified into two distinct geographic zones – the BRSP and Study Areas. The 264-acre BRSP project site encompasses the majority of the southwestern portion of the Urban Reserve area. The balance of the Urban Reserve area is divided into four Study Areas. These consist of four geographic areas located northeast and southwest of the BRSP area. The four Study Areas, combined, encompass approximately 128 acres. Figure 2 illustrates the boundaries of the BRSP and adjacent Study Areas.

The project applicant proposes to amend the General Plan to re-designate land within the BRSP area to be consistent with the land uses identified in the Specific Plan. The Specific Plan and related General Plan Amendment will be analyzed in the EIR at a project level. Concurrent with this effort, the City proposes to amend the General Plan to re-designate the Study Areas from Urban Reserve to Rural Density Residential (RDR), with a minimum 2-acre lot size. This effort would provide a limited holding capacity for infrastructure and public services, and will be analyzed in the EIR at a programmatic level.

### **BRSP Project Components**

The BRSP proposes a mix of residential and non-residential land uses to form a new residential community in the southwest area of Auburn. Most of the BRSP area is proposed for residential uses, providing opportunities for development of up to 1,300 new homes with a density range of between 1 to 20 dwelling units per acre (du/ac). In addition, the BRSP provides for development of a mixed-use core in a central Village Center that would support up to 120,000 square feet (sf) of mixed use space with commercial, office, business professional, and residential uses. The development concept for the Village Center is to provide opportunities for the creation of local-serving goods and services to support the residential community. The BRSP also incorporates a significant open space component, preserving approximately 65 acres (nearly 20%) of the area's natural terrain.

During construction of the BRSP, it is anticipated that rock crushing equipment would be used on-site to crush rock for use in construction. In addition, there maybe timber mill equipment on-site to mill trees removed to accommodate the project. Some of this wood may also be used for project construction.



## Land Use Plan

Figure 3, Land Use Plan, illustrates the proposed land uses within the BRSP. These uses are described below.

### *Residential Uses*

Almost 200 acres of the BRSP area are designated for residential uses, which have a total allocation of up to 1,300 dwelling units. Three residential land use designations are provided on the Land Use Plan: low, medium, and high density residential (LDR, MDR, HDR, respectively). The LDR uses are assumed to develop at an average density of 1 to 3 du/ac. For the MDR areas, the project is assumed to develop at an average density of 8 to 9 du/ac. HDR areas are assumed to develop between 15 to 20 du/ac. Additionally, residential uses would be allowed on the Village Retail Mixed Use designation so long as the total number of residential units does not exceed 1,300 du.

LDR areas are envisioned to accommodate single-family detached homes on conventional lots, which may be relatively large in some areas of the community due to existing site topography. Medium density areas are also envisioned to accommodate single-family detached homes, but on smaller lots. In addition, it is envisioned that some MDR areas, particularly in areas where site topography creates constraints to conventional development patterns, and all HDR areas, would support attached housing units within the prescribed density range. A variety of housing types could ultimately be supported which could include standard or alley-loaded lots, courtyard lots, green court lots, auto courts, alley clusters, zero-lot lines, z-shaped lots, duet/ halfplex homes, townhomes, or condominiums.

### *Village Retail Mixed Use*

Several parcels are provided in the central hub of the BRSP area for creation of a Village Center along the primary roadway accessing the community. These sites, which total approximately 6 acres, would have a Mixed Use land use designation to allow for a mixture of up to 120,000 sf of commercial, office, and/or high density residential uses (assuming a floor area ratio up to 3.0 as outlined in the City's General Plan), which could be mixed in either a horizontal or vertical manner. The types of uses envisioned for the Village Center would include local-serving retail and office establishments such as a grocer, restaurants, food services, general merchandise stores, small office operations, or possibly a police substation.

### *Park and Open Space Uses*

A total of approximately 65 acres of parks and open space are proposed within the BRSP. This includes a total of five acres of parks, with a three-acre park, or Village Green, located in the community's core. This park is intended to function as a recreation hub located within an easy walk from the Village Center and HDR neighborhoods. In addition, approximately 60 acres of Open Space are provided throughout the community, with preservation areas guided by the site's natural features and topography. The system of open space would remain largely in its



existing, natural condition. It is envisioned that a trail system would be provided throughout the open space area, linking the neighborhoods by bike and foot.

### *Circulation Systems*

The BRSP area is near I-80, a six-lane highway located along the site's northwestern edge. Indirect access from I-80 to the BRSP area is provided by Ophir Road, which connects with Werner Road, as shown in Figure 3. As part of the project, Werner Road would be extended southeast as a collector roadway to provide access to the interior of the BRSP area. The Werner Road extension would also include a new bridge over the UPRR eastbound line. A second access roadway to the BRSP area would be provided via the extension of Herdal Drive, which connects with Auburn-Folsom Road to the east. This roadway extension would also function as a collector and would include a new bridge over the westbound line of the UPRR. The Werner and Herdal roadway extensions would provide primary vehicular access throughout the BRSP area. In addition, an emergency vehicle access (EVA) point would be provided in the southwest corner of the plan area via a connection to the existing Perry Ranch Road.

### *Infrastructure Systems*

Development of the BRSP would include the infrastructure systems needed to serve buildout of the area. Backbone systems would include water conveyance, wastewater collection, and storm drainage. Infrastructure for recycled water use may be included as an option for the community, which would be provided by the City's wastewater treatment plant, located to the northwest of the project site.

It is anticipated that the following agencies would provide services to the BRSP area:

- Water – Placer County Water Agency (PCWA)
- Wastewater – City of Auburn
- Recycled Water (if used) – City of Auburn
- Storm Drainage/ Flood Control – City of Auburn
- Electricity/Natural Gas – Pacific Gas & Electric
- Cable – Wave Broadband

### *Off-site Improvements*

Several off-site improvements would be needed to serve development of the BRSP area such as the extension or construction of roadways, utility infrastructure, and/or other public facilities. As master plans are developed for the project's infrastructure systems, additional off-site capital improvements may be identified. At this time it is anticipated that off-site improvements could include the following:

- construction and/or improvements to existing roadways and /or intersections, including, but not limited to Werner Road and Herdal Drive;

- construction of bridges over the UPRR corridors;
- construction, improvement, and/or upsizing of water, recycled water and sewer lines within existing roadway corridors; and
- extension of, improvements to, or modifications of wastewater trunk lines located to the west of the project site.

## Study Areas

The balance of the project area, approximately 128 acres, has been divided into four Study Areas, summarized in Table 1 and shown on Figure 2. These areas are currently designated as Urban Reserve in the General Plan. The proposed project would re-designate these areas to Rural Density Residential (RDR) with a minimum 2-acre lot size. This effort would provide a limited holding capacity for infrastructure and public services, but would not provide development entitlements at this time. In order to develop any of the Study Area parcels, rezoning and project-specific studies, including CEQA compliance, would be needed. The ultimate number of units would depend on terrain and other considerations, but would not exceed 64 du. There are currently nine residences located within these four Study Areas so the maximum increase would be limited to 55 du.

<b>Table 1 Study Areas Summary</b>			
	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Existing Residences</b>	<b>Maximum No. of Residences</b>
Study Area 1	32	4	16
Study Area 2	14	2	7
Study Area 3	36	0	18
Study Area 4	46	3	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>128 ac</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>64</b>

## Environmental Effects

The technical sections of the Draft EIR will describe the existing conditions on the proposed project site and surrounding lands. Relevant federal, state, and local laws and regulations, including City of Auburn General Plan policies, will be summarized. The methods of analysis and standards of significance used to determine the significance of impacts of the project will be described in each of the technical sections of the EIR, including any assumptions that are important to understand the conclusion of the analysis. The standards for determining impact significance will be based on existing state and federal rules, regulations, and laws, City ordinances and policies, and past practices. The standards will be used both to determine whether an impact is significant and the effectiveness of recommended mitigation. Any feasible mitigation measures will be identified for each significant impact. The description of mitigation



measures will identify the specific actions to be taken, the timing of the action, and the parties responsible for implementation of the measure.

At this time, it is anticipated that the following issue areas will be addressed in the EIR:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology/Soils (including Mineral Resources)
- Hazards & Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Land Use/Planning
- Noise
- Public Services (police, fire, schools and parks)
- Public Utilities (water, wastewater, solid waste, dry utilities)
- Transportation and Traffic/Circulation

The EIR will not address issues associated with agricultural resources, or population, employment and housing.

### **Alternatives**

The EIR will examine up to four project alternatives, including a No Project/No Development Alternative. A discussion of alternatives considered but rejected without full analysis will also be included. At this time, it is anticipated that the range of potentially feasible alternatives could include:

- No Project/No Action
- Increased Density on a Smaller Footprint (Increased Open Space)
- Reduced Density

### **Anticipated Project Approvals**

#### **City of Auburn**

As part of the approval process the City of Auburn would need to certify the EIR and approve the following entitlements in order to implement the proposed project:

- General Plan Amendment;
- Rezone;
- Adoption of the Specific Plan;

- Development Agreement;
- Financing Plan;
- Tentative Subdivision Map – for the large lot subdivision map; and
- Tree permit – for the BRSP improvements.

### **Other Agencies**

The EIR prepared for the proposed project would be used by Responsible Agencies and Trustee Agencies that may have some approval authority over the proposed project (i.e., issue a permit). The project applicant would obtain all permits, as required by law. The following agencies, which may be considered Responsible Agencies, may have discretionary authority over approval of certain project elements, or alternatively, may serve in a ministerial capacity:

- United States Army Corps of Engineers;
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service;
- California Department of Fish and Game;
- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection;
- California Public Utilities Commission;
- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Placer County Water Agency; and
- Placer County Air Pollution Control District.

### **Submitting Comments**

To ensure that the full range of project issues of interest to responsible government agencies and the public are addressed. Comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Written comments or questions concerning the EIR for the proposed project should be directed to following address by **5:00 p.m. on Friday, February 8, 2008.**

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All comments must include full name and address in order for staff to respond appropriately.

A public scoping meeting will also be held during this comment period on January 24, 2008 from 4 to 7 p.m. at City Hall, 1225 Lincoln Way, Auburn, in Room 10. A brief overview of the project and EIR process will be provided at 4 p.m. and again at 6 p.m. City staff, the project applicant

and consultants will be available to answer general questions about the Specific Plan and EIR process and receive input on issues to be further evaluated in the EIR. Responsible agencies and members of the public are invited to attend and provide input on the scope of the EIR.